

NSC BRIEFING

30 April 1958

*on Geography*  
BACKGROUND PIECE ~~OF~~ NORTHERN CELEBES, HALMAHERA, MOROTAI, ~~TERATE~~

I. Northern Peninsula of Celebes

- A. Airline distance from Donggala to Manado about 395 statute miles
  - 1. Width of peninsula varies from 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles to 65 miles.
  - 2. Natural route across mountains from north coast to Gorontalo is slightly over 25 miles.
  - 3. No railroads. Only roads are in vicinity of Manado and across peninsula to Gorontalo.
- B. Coastal plains very narrow and discontinuous, but contain almost all population (pop. <sup>2 million</sup> ~~6,000,000~~) and significant economic activity.
  - 1. Coast is irregular, with numerous bays and inlets.
  - 2. There are numerous beaches well suited for amphibious landings, especially along north coast, but exits inland from beaches are difficult.
- C. Rugged mountains (3,000 to 9,000 feet) with narrow ridges and deep gorges rise steeply from coastal plains and occupy most of area. (Several active volcanoes are found on peninsula)
  - 1. Mountain spurs extend to coast in many places, leaving short stretches of low-lying shore between steep capes.
  - 2. Mountains generally heavily covered with tropical evergreen forest.
- D. Manado (pop. 80,000) lies at head of Manado Bay and at edge of most important lowland area in peninsula.

1. It is second-ranking port of Celebes and is connected with nearby cocoanut plantations by road network.
- E. Donggala lies at mouth and Palu at the head of Palu Bay.
  1. Bay is about 3 to 4 miles wide and about 17 miles long.
  2. Its waters are very deep, and hills run up steeply from sea.
- F. Gorontalo lies on the south coast of peninsula at mouth of Bone River.
  1. Hills rise steeply on both sides of river mouth.
  2. Gorontalo is connected with north coast by road through mountains.

## II. Halmahera

- A. Halmahera is one of largest islands of the Moluccas, 200 miles long with an area of 6,500 square miles.
- B. Almost entire island is mountainous and densely forested; population sparse.
- C. Coasts are mostly steep but there are extensive stretches with numerous beaches well suited for amphibious landings.
- D. Djailolo, a minor port and site of an airfield, lies at head of Djailolo Bay and at the edge of a low-lying river plain.

## III. Morotai

- A. Morotai lies about 11 miles northeast of Halmahera.
  1. It is almost 50 miles long and largely mountainous; population is concentrated on or near the coast.
  2. Best landing beaches are along east coast.
- B. Pitu airfield was developed as a heavy bomber base during World War II and is currently maintained by the Indonesian Air Force.

IV. Ternate

A. Ternate Island lies just west of Halmahera.

1. It is 6 miles wide and has an area of 25 square miles.

2. It consists mainly of an active volcano.

B. Coastal area is very densely populated.

C. Ternate town, the principal settlement, is an administrative center and the most important port in the northern Moluccas.